



Legislative Update

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Number 11
March 16, 2018
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REACH OUT TO YOUR LEGISLATORS OVER THE LEGISLATIVE SPRING BREAK; INVITE THEM TO VISIT YOUR SCHOOL.

The House and Senate left for a one-week break on March 15 and will reconvene on March 26. The Association asks that you take advantage of this pause in the legislative action to contact your State Representative and State Senator using the links below.

You are an expert on issues affecting you, your students and your school. Legislators need to hear from education experts like you in their community. They also need to see and understand the successes and challenges of the students, staff and schools directly by visiting schools like yours.

Building a long-term relationship with your legislators will help you effectively advocate on key issues, but building those relationships takes time and, of course, begins with the first step.

To help build and strengthen the relationship, MNEA suggests that the message address your current thoughts and concerns about your students and your school, highlight an issue you regard as important and invite your legislator to visit your school at a time of mutual convenience. The school visit will offer a chance to help your legislator to better understand the successes and challenges faced every day by your students and your school.

Contact your State Representative:

<http://www.capwiz.com/nea/mo/issues/alert/?alertid=80094626&type=ST>

Contact your State Senator:

<http://www.capwiz.com/nea/mo/issues/alert/?alertid=80093626&type=ST>

PAYCHECK AND ANTI-BARGAINING BILL

The Senate Fiscal Oversight Committee approved SCS/HB 1413 (Taylor) on March 15. The bill is on the Senate Calendar and could be taken up for debate at any time after the Senate returns following next week's spring break.

The Association strongly opposes SCS/HB 1413. The House version of the bill requires annual authorization for payroll deduction of member dues and annual authorization for member contributions of dues or fees for political action. The bill also imposes federal-style financial reporting mandates on both statewide public unions and all affiliated local organizations, regardless of size.

The SCS version adds the provisions of SB 602 (Onder). SB 602 imposes a number of onerous and problematic provisions relating to public union representation and collective bargaining.

BUDGET

The House Budget Committee completed markup on the House Committee Substitutes for the education budget bills, HB 2002 (Fitzpatrick) for K-12 education and HB 2003 (Fitzpatrick) for higher education, on March 14. The budget bills should be ready for House floor debate and approval when the legislature returns after next week's spring break.

The Budget Committee made few changes to the key components of the HCS budget bills on key education funding issues like K-12 formula funding and core funding for public colleges and universities. The committee did approve an amendment to reallocate \$12M in funding from collaborative program budget lines to college and university core budgets.

HCS/HB 2002, the K-12 education budget bill, increases K-12 formula funding by about \$46M over the Governor's recommendation, reaching the \$98M increase estimated by DESE as needed to fully fund the foundation formula for next school year. The HCS does not increase funding for pupil transportation above the Governor's recommendation of \$92M.

In HCS/HB 2003, the higher education funding bill, the committee restored 4.2% of the core cuts to the public colleges and universities and increased funding for Access Missouri, the primary need-based scholarship program for college students, by \$30M over the Governor's recommendation.

SENATE PASSES VIRTUAL SCHOOL BILL

The Senate gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to SS/SCS/SBs 603, 576 and 898 (Onder) on March 15. The bill would establish a new virtual course access program by revising the current MoVIP. The Association believes that virtual courses can play an important role for schools and students, and supports the bill.

The SS makes several changes to ensure that the bill remains consistent with several important features of the existing MoVIP program. The Senate adopted several technical amendments, including language to ensure that medically fragile students may be exempted from the prior semester public school attendance requirement and adding the option for the school board to consider appeals of denied course requests. Sen. Munzlinger also amended his SB 682 to allow students enrolled in virtual institutions to participate in the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program.

TIFS AND SCHOOL REVENUES

The House Local Government Committee heard HB 1236 (Stacy) on March 14. The bill allows a school board to vote to exempt revenues from its operating levy from reductions by tax increment financing for redevelopment projects. The Association believes that school districts should have a more equitable voice in decisions on tax expenditures like TIFs that affect school revenues and supports the bill.

VISITING SCHOLARS CERTIFICATE

The Senate gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to HB 1665 (Swan) to authorize the granting of a visiting scholars certificate to teachers in public schools. The Association supports the bill. The bill has been approved in the same form by both chambers (Truly Agreed To) and the final version will be signed by the Speaker and Pro Tem and sent to the Governor for his approval or veto.

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM APPROVAL

The Senate gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to SS/SCS/HB 1465 (Cookson) to modify provisions relating to degree offerings at public institutions of higher education. The bill now returns to the House for consideration of the Senate changes to the bill. The SS makes minor changes to language regarding certain programs that are limited to being offered by certain institutions.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard the following bills on March 13:

HB 1370 (Sommer) to require public schools to post certain financial information online for public access. The Association supports the bill.

HB 1371 (Sommer) to require any district with a state-approved gifted education program to have a process that allows parents or guardians to appeal a determination that their child does not qualify for gifted services. The Association supports the bill.

HB 1421 (Pfautsch) to require each school district to establish a policy on acceleration and districts with gifted education programs to establish appeal procedures. The Association supports the bill.

HB 1420 (Pfautsch) to extend the sunset on the early learning quality assurance report program. The Association supports the bill.

HB 1415 (Lauer) to allow teachers to count hours spent in externships with local businesses as professional development hours. The Association supports the bill.

HB 1455 (Lauer) to require high schools and public institutions of higher education to provide information related to careers and salaries to students. The Association supports the bill.

In addition to hearing bills, the committee voted to approve the following bills:

SB 687 (Sater) to allow school districts to allocate less than 1.0% but no less than 0.5% of moneys received under the school foundation formula to the professional development committee of the district when certain requirements are met. The Association is concerned that the bill weakens the state's commitment to professional development for teachers and opposes the bill.

SB 728 (Wallingford) to allow children who attend early childhood education programs that are under contracts with districts or charter schools to be included in the average daily attendance of the district or charter school.

HCS/HB 1606 (Gannon) to provide financial aid for first time test takers of the HISET high school equivalency exam. The Association supports the bill.

HB 1744 (Hansen) to modify the A+ Schools Program by removing the requirement that the student's attendance of public high school occur in the three years immediately prior to graduation. The Association supports the bill.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee rescheduled its weekly meeting to March 14 and heard the following bills:

HB 1712 (Pfautsch) to require teacher training institutions to implement certain graduation requirements for elementary education students aimed at improving literacy in schools. The bill requires completion of additional literacy instruction.

HB 1847 (Kidd) to allow a school board to vote to exempt revenues from its operating levy from reductions by tax increment financing for redevelopment projects. The Association believes that school districts should have a more equitable voice in decisions on tax expenditures like TIFs that affect school revenues and supports the bill.

HB 2332 (Corlew) to revise provisions relating to notice requirements on bidding on construction projects authorized by school districts.

HB 2529 (Morse) to modify the definition of average daily attendance in the school foundation formula by excluding a district's two days of lowest attendance from the calculation.

HB 2625 (Lyle Rowland) to create new provisions relating to educational services for neglected or delinquent children. DESE shall collection information on educational services provided for students in state custody, share that contract information among districts and annually report to the legislature.

The committee approved the following bills on March 14:

HCS/HB 1245 (Bangert) to require the state board of education to convene a task force to develop a ninth grade course on career readiness.

HCS/HB 1363 (Kidd) to require teachers and principals to complete two hours of suicide prevention education each school year.

HCS/HB 1385 (Spencer) to give students with scores above a certain level on certain assessment a notation on their high school diploma.

HCS/HB 1493 (Wood) to require school districts to recognize certain graduate and undergraduate hours as equivalent to a master's degree on the salary schedule.

HB 1664 (Swan) to allow children who attend early childhood education programs that are under contracts with districts or charter schools to be included in the average daily attendance of the district or charter school.

HOUSE GENERAL LAWS COMMITTEE

The committee heard several bills on March 13:

HB 2073 (Kelly) to allow school districts to display, on school property, scenes or symbols associated with traditional winter and spring celebrations.

HB 2232 (Ross) to require schools to forward information concerning violations of district rules by former employees. The Association is concerned that the bill does not currently respect the due process rights of employees and opposes the bill.

HB 2284 (Dohrman) to require public colleges and universities to adopt a policy on free expression that is consistent with several principles of free speech specified in the bill. The free expression policy shall be made available to students and faculty annually. The bill also requires institutions to adopt a "student-on-student harassment" policy.

GOVERNANCE OF ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Senate Government Reform Committee was scheduled to hear SB 1054 (Nasheed) on March 14, but the hearing was cancelled. The bill creates requirements that would apply to school districts, like St. Louis Public Schools, that may return to local governance after being under the authority of an alternate governing structure. The requirements pertain to several topics, including interaction with the superintendent, administration and teachers and establishing annual district goals and providing annual reports.

The bill also provides that the Commissioner of Education shall establish an oversight body that will have authority to intervene in persistently underperforming attendance centers and schools, as defined in the bill. The Association is concerned by the brief and vague language regarding the statewide intervention powers of the oversight body created in the act.

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